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ABSTRACT

This paper presents findings of a case study conducted at a middle school to understand how substantive change occurs in a school that has moved beyond the initial transition stage. The study was conducted during the 1991-92 school year at Cross Keys Middle School in Florissant, Missouri, which was changing from a traditional junior high school to a middle school. Methodology included document analysis, informal interviews with school staff, observation, and formal interviews with 19 classroom teachers, 3 counselors, and 3 administrators. Five themes were identified to describe changes that occurred in the school--mission rearticulation, structural realignment, program redefinition, role renegotiation, and power redistribution. A leadership typology was developed to describe school leaders who emerged as power was redistributed. Based on the five themes, a change-interaction diagram was developed to describe how the connections between and among the school's mission, structure, roles, program, and leaders created a culture of conflict and tension. Because the school was willing to embrace conflict as an acceptable byproduct of change, some staff experienced a shift in their paradigms about teaching and learning. Appendices contain the interview protocol, a bibliography of documents, two tables, and two figures. (Contains 12 references.) (LMI)

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A Case of Distributed Leadership: Middle School Transformation Beyond Initial Transition

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Abstract

Moving from a traditional junior high school to a middle school involves fundamental, substantive change. Schools early in the transition process focus primarily on the organizational and structural issues related to the middle school movement (Strahan, 1992). Moving beyond these early concerns to incorporate the middle school philosophy into the character of the school, however, involves a "change in the values, beliefs, and culture of the school" (Spear, 1992, p. 103). Understanding how this type of transformational change occurs (Deal, 1990), and how leaders in the school work to bring this type of change about, may assist others as they move beyond the initial stages of transition.

A case study of Cross Keys Middle School was conducted during the 1991-92 school year to understand how substantive change occurs in a school which has moved beyond initial transition. A set of field notes was developed from formal and informal interviews, observations, and impressions gathered in the school. Key district and school documents were analyzed to provide a context for the study. The five themes of *mission rearticulation, structural realignment, program redefinition, role renegotiation,* and *power redistribution* emerged from the data to describe the changes which had taken place in the school. A leadership typology was developed to describe the leaders distributed throughout the school who emerged as power was redistributed in the school.

The five themes formed the foundation for the development of a change interaction diagram which described how the connections between and among the school's mission, structure, roles, program, and leaders created a culture of conflict and tension. As a result of the school's willingness to embrace conflict and tension as an acceptable by-product of change, some in the school experienced a shift in their paradigm about teaching and learning. Others in the process of making a transition from a traditional junior high school to a middle school may learn from Cross Keys about the role of distributed leaders in the school and how they work to bring about substantive change.

A Case of Distributed Leadership: Middle School Transformation Beyond Initial Transition

Introduction

The national movement to reform practices for middle-level learners, sparked initially during the 1960s by a growing dissatisfaction with the traditional junior high school model (Lounsbury, 1992) was further kindled by the publication of Turning Points: Preparing Youth for the 21st Century (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989). Educators were called upon to change the structure, organization, and program in the junior high school, which had, since 1909, been the predominant delivery system for early adolescent education.

As schools responded to this call for change, schools were reconfigured to include grades 6, 7, and 8, instead of 7, 8, and 9. Names on buildings were changed to reflect their new middle school identity, and fancy new block schedules were designed for the interdisciplinary teaching teams which replaced departments in the school. Schools early in the transition process focused primarily on these organizational and structural issues related to the middle school movement (Strahan, 1992), however, incorporating the middle school philosophy into the character of the schools involved a "change in the values, beliefs, and culture of the school" (Spear, 1992, p. 103).

The type of fundamental change of culture, defined as transformational change by Deal (1990), moves beyond the organizational tinkerings of the initial transition phase. For successful transformation "educators need to navigate the difficult space between letting go of old patterns and grabbing on to new ones" (Deal, 1990, p.11). Yet during the 30 year period of focus on change in middle-level education, "there is some validity in claims of minimal real change" (Irvin, 1992, p.xx).

If fundamental change in the culture of schools attempting to adopt the principles and philosophy associated with the national middle school movement is to take place, then a deeper understanding is needed of how schools successfully navigate these changes, and how leaders in the school serve to support or inhibit such changes. This study focused on one school which is engaged in the process of fundamental change. The school used the national middle school movement as a platform for their change efforts which had been underway for eight years. Their story tells how leaders distributed throughout the school worked sometimes in harmony, often in conflict, to bring about fundamental, substantive change in the school.

Related Literature

The organization of secondary education to include a distinct junior high school program originally initiated in 1888, had fallen out of favor by the 1960s. A "growing dissatisfaction with the junior high school as it had evolved, a Sputnik-induced obsession with academic mastery... and the recognition that young people were indeed maturing physically earlier" prompted a reevaluation of what schools could and should do for learners in between elementary and high school (Lounsbury, 1992, p. 10). What happened between the 1880s and the 1980s (see, for example Melton, 1984; Alexander & McEwin, 1989; Lounsbury, 1990 & 1992) resulted in fewer schools organized for grades 7, 8, and 9 and more which served grades 6, 7, and 8 (Alexander & McEwin, 1989). But it was neither the grade configuration nor the name of the school which made the difference between identifying a school as a junior high or middle school. Instead, the unique features a particular school offered determined whether or not the school truly embodied the middle school philosophy of meeting the special needs of early adolescents. Emerging practices associated with the middle school movement often included interdisciplinary teaming, flexible block scheduling, advisory and exploratory programs, integrated curriculum, hands-on instruction, heterogeneous grouping of students, and a staff knowledgeable about early adolescents (see, for example Muth & Alvermann, 1992; George, Stevenson, Thomason & Beane, 1992). These practices were further articulated by the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989), which set forth recommendations "squarely in line with what middle school educators had been saying for years" (George, et.al, p. 12). Their recommendations summarized the principles associated with the national middle school movement.

1. Create small communities for learning.
2. Teach a core academic program.
3. Ensure success for all students.
4. Empower teachers and administrators to make decisions about the experiences of middle grade students.
5. Staff middle grade school with teachers who are expert at teaching young adolescents.
6. Improve academic performance through fostering the health and fitness of young adolescents.
7. Reengage families in the education of young adolescents.
8. Connect schools with communities (p. 9-10).

Although the Carnegie Council report gave the middle school movement a national agenda, "schools in the middle remain, programmatically, far from achieving the goals of the Carnegie recommendations" (George, et. al, p. 14). In order to implement these practices, schools would have to change.

Cuban (1988) has suggested that there are two types of change; first order

and second order. First-order changes are those which "try to make what exists more efficient and effective without disturbing the basic organizational features, without substantially altering how adults and children in schools perform their roles" (p. 93). Second-order changes "seek to alter the fundamental ways that organizations are put together because of major dissatisfaction with present arrangements. New goals, structures, and roles that transform familiar ways of doing things into novel solutions to persistent problems are introduced" (p. 93). Cuban argued that most reform efforts since the turn of the century represent first order changes, with occasional attempts at second-order change, such as voucher education, student-centered instruction, nongraded schools, team teaching, and open space architecture.

Spear (1992) identified the more substantive change needed in moving from a junior high to a middle school as a "change in the values, beliefs, and culture of the school" (p. 103). In addition to the structural changes involved in the development of interdisciplinary teams, changes in curriculum and instruction required time for individual learning and reflection.

Richardson (1992) claimed that "teachers change practices all the time" (p. 80), noting that most changes observed were classified as Cuban's first-order changes. However, a few teachers were identified as undergoing fundamental, second-order change when teachers as groups and individuals developed analytic justifications for how, what, and why they teach. External imposition of standards and mandates for practice were identified as barriers to substantive change, while time for reflection and thoughtful analysis to justify teaching practices supported change efforts. Change was defined as a "long and sometimes painful process" (p. 82) and would be possible if the beliefs and justifications of the administrators also changed.

The literature on school leadership was replete with claims that the autocratic, top-down management style of the past must be abandoned for a more participatory, inclusive approach. Phrases like teacher empowerment, participatory decision making, and shared power appeared consistently in discussions about school leadership, restructuring, and reform.

Like their counterparts at other levels of the system, middle level administrators were also challenged to reform past practice. Effective middle school leaders were those who built a climate of shared decision making, facilitated personal ownership, enhanced collaboration and consensus, improved communication, and redefined traditional roles to increase responsibility of all school personnel (George, et.al, 1992). Four skills have been identified as critical for the successful development and maintenance of effective middle schools.

1. Leaders must possess a clear understanding of the characteristics and needs of young adolescents and

must translate that understanding into a vision of an appropriately organized and effective middle-level school.

2. They must be able to make recognizable progress toward the realization of that vision by organizing staff members, students, programs, time and the building in such a way as to create a unique and effective learning environment based on the characteristics of young adolescents.
3. Leaders must understand what tasks need to be accomplished during the reorganization process and possess the skills of "change agentry" necessary to bring those tasks to a successful completion.
4. They must be able to engage the stakeholders in a process of shared decision making in the continued long-term maintenance and improvement of the school(s). (George, et.al, 1992, p. 111).

If "local leaders hold the key to lasting change", as Lewis asserts (p. 40), then we need to fully understand who the local leaders in schools are and how they work together to bring about fundamental change for school improvement. The purpose of this study was to examine the change process related to the transformation of a traditional junior high school to a middle school to more fully understand the leadership needed to implement and sustain these changes.

Research Method

Case Study Site Selection. Cross Keys Middle School in the Ferguson-Florissant Public School District, Florissant, Missouri was selected as a research site by the National Center for School Leadership (NCSL) during the summer of 1991. Specific criteria used to identify the site included:

1) Level of implementation: Contacts with professionals involved in the national and state middle school associations identified schools which had made initial progress towards implementing many of the concepts and practices associated with the middle school movement. Cross Keys Middle School was consistently named as a school which had undergone major changes in an attempt to transform from a traditional junior high school to a middle school.
2) Recognition: Cross Keys had gained a national and regional reputation for its progress towards becoming a fully functioning middle school. Cross Keys had been recognized as an exemplary school by the United States Secondary School Recognition Program in 1989; named a Missouri School of Excellence in 1989; and became part of the Danforth Marginal Learners/Responsive Schools Program in 1990.
3) Availability: Given the intensity of the research design, the school selected as the site for the research needed to be located in an area where the researcher could spend adequate time at the school throughout the year of study.

4) Willingness: The final selection criterion for the site was the willingness of the district and school to participate in the study.

Site Description. The Ferguson-Florissant School District, one of approximately 750 public school districts in the state of Missouri, served 10,976 students (46% African-American; 52% White; 2% other racial/ethnic groups) grades prekindergarten through twelve in 15 elementary, 3 middle and 3 high school centers. The appointment of an internal candidate to the superintendency in December, 1991, prompted a reorganization of other central office assignments, tasks, roles and functions. District financial resources provided a $5,324 per-pupil expenditure from district (73.1%), state (21.5%), county (1.7%), and federal (3.7%) sources.

The student population at Cross Keys Middle School of 641 students was representative of a diverse society (44% African-American; 55% White; 1% Asian) with 28% qualified for free or reduced lunch. The 42 classroom teachers had an average of 19 years teaching experience, many in the same building. Students and their teachers were organized around 6 interdisciplinary teaching teams.

Insert Table 1 about here

The building principal was beginning her fifteenth year as a district administrator; her eighth year as the principal of Cross Keys. She worked with one new assistant principal assigned to the building in 1991-92, and with a second assistant who had three years of experience in the position.

Data Collection. Initial contacts were made with the Ferguson-Florissant Public School central office administration and building administration during July and August, 1991, and access was gained for the researcher to spend a year in the school gathering data. Between September, 1991 and May, 1992, informal and formal interviews were conducted with staff members and general and targeted observations of classroom and school activities were completed. A total of 22 formal interviews, including 2 group interviews, were conducted with 19 classroom teachers, 3 counselors, and 3 administrators. Teachers interviewed were identified during formal and informal conversations as key players in the school. An interview protocol was developed for formal interviews in collaboration with the research team at NCSL (See *Appendix A*) to explore the leadership of the school by focusing on the school's shared commitment, how decisions were made to bring about changes related to the school's commitment, and the changes which had been made or planned by the school. Follow-up probes were used for each question

depending upon the style and tone of the interview. Signed consent was collected from each formal interview subject. While the school was not guaranteed anonymity, individuals were assured confidentiality and no information about specific interviews was shared with other members of the school. Formal interviews were tape recorded, transcribed and returned to subjects for review. Edited transcripts of formal interviews were combined with notes of impressions, informal interviews and conversations, and observations to develop a 402 page set of field notes for analysis.

Key district and school documents were also reviewed to provide supportive evidence for data gathered during interviews and observations to develop an accurate context for the research (See *Appendix B*). Documents which related to the district and school mission, program, policies, and structure were selected for analysis.

Data Analysis. Data were analyzed using a constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) by the site researcher. Themes and categories were identified following each formal interview and observation and were continuously refined through repeated readings of field notes and transcripts. Similarities and differences across data were maximized to assure that the final categories were well integrated. A final set of five themes emerged from the data to describe the changing culture of the school: *mission rearticulation, structural realignment, program redefinition, role renegotiation,* and *power redistribution*.

All data were independently analyzed by research assistants at NCSL to provide one additional form of validity check. An eight member research team met throughout the data collection phase to jointly review data to insure that the categories and resultant conceptualizations were comprehensive. Finally, the case study was shared with the school in September, 1992 for validation by the school of the factual evidence used to develop the implications of the research.

Results

Results were organized around the five themes of *mission rearticulation, structural realignment, program redefinition, role renegotiation,* and *power redistribution,* to describe the culture of the school as it moved beyond initial transition issues to those issues which would fundamentally transform its character. The themes which emerged from data analysis served as the foundation for the development of a change interaction model which described how the connections between and among the school's mission, structure, roles, program, and leaders created a culture of conflict and tension in the school.

Mission Rearticulation. Like many schools, Cross Keys had adopted a formal mission statement that found its way into school and district documents (See, for example, ASCD publication, 1988, *Appendix B*). Their mission appeared focused on "educating all students" using a "middle school approach", yet the value of their mission emerged in the debate surrounding its interpretation and use rather than in its rhetoric.

To some, educating all students was interpreted literally. *I feel that we are committed to see that each student learns to the best of his ability.* Others *were committed to maintain...some standards of academic rigor* even if that meant some students would fail. Others thought *it is foolish to think you can have 100% success and if you don't that it's the fault of the system.*

Although a general sense emerged that the middle school concept was the best way to meet students' needs, how middle school was defined depended on the speaker. Some looked outside of the school at the scholarly literature for a definition of middle school. Others, however, thought the definition should emerge from within.

> *There aren't any tablets from God telling us what a middle school should be...I just assumed that whatever these people who are writing about or telling us about the middle school is just advice. I don't consider their opinion any more valid than my own.*

And a few in the school were not convinced that the middle school approach was the best to take and *adamantly disagree with the idea that what [the school is] doing is best for kids.*

Discussion of mission surfaced similarities in how people in the school felt and in what they valued and believed. Commonalities provided the school with a general sense of direction, cohesiveness, and purpose. However, the differences in the way that their mission was understood and interpreted were accepted and valued as well. Open discourse and debate allowed them to learn more about one another and to better understand individual behavior, decision-making, and motivation. Rearticulation of their mission on a regular basis helped the school think critically and reflectively about where they were going and why.

Structural Realignment. The structure and organization of the school personnel and student population had undergone a variety of changes, although a teamed framework was used rather than departmentalization since the school was opened in 1968. *Teams have been here a long time...but probably none of us knew what a middle school was at that time or what it was supposed to be.* Various sizes of teams, ranging from two to eight member teams, had been organized and

reorganized over the years. And while a few individual teams had already made a shift in how they viewed their team, as a school, they were in the midst of making *the transition from looking at teams as numerical groupings to using them to form identifies.*

Most recently, the school was experimenting with what they called "learning communities" and multi-age teams to expand their understanding of the teaming process. Yet, the focus remained on how the organizational structure could enhance instruction, rather than on the structure itself. *Structure is not what's important. Structure doesn't impact learning. It only affects what happens in classrooms and that is what is important.* Teams were used to create a sense of community and smallness within the school for students and staff, allowing for increased interaction between and among students and their teachers.

A flexible block-of-time schedule had been used in the school for eight years, and most teachers were skilled at flexing their team time to accommodate curricular and instructional needs. [Teams] *have full blocks of time to work in and the teachers all group and regroup at their own choosing. They're all on different daily rotations and some of them change those weekly. They're as fluid and flexible with their time as they want to be.* On teams and within the teams, students had generally been grouped for instruction heterogeneously, moving away from an at-risk team which had been formed and discarded several years ago, for balanced teams and classes. *We're not using ability grouping. Whatever is presented is presented to the whole group. Kids learn from other kids. They learn and have their self-esteem. Students don't say they're in the slow group, so that's not a stigma because we don't do it .*

Teachers, without exception, viewed their team as an important vehicle for collaboration, communication, and support. Team planning time was built into the master schedule and provided a daily opportunity for teams to meet to make both routine and substantive decisions. Team planning time was used to *identify students for special recognition or special programs,* to *adapt the schedule to accommodate team activities,* and to *share information about school-wide functions.* Other teams used their planning time to *discuss curriculum, develop interdisciplinary units,* and to *share successful instructional strategies* with their teammates.

The school had begun to realign their focus on how structural and organizational changes could be made in ways which would promote their mission. Initially, the structure had been seen as the end; now they knew it was merely the means to an end. They were redesigning structures in the school's teams and schedules to realign values around curriculum and instruction instead of organization, yet clearly, not everyone in the school was at the same place at the

same time. Some remained caught up in the details of structure, others moved ahead to issues of substance.

Program Redefinition. The school had made progress in redefining what the curriculum of the school should be and how it should be developed. When the school published *A Place of Our Own* in 1991, they made public their philosophy about interdisciplinary curriculum. The work was based on the creation of a metaphor called *entrancing* which linked the student directly to the curriculum and presented a series of units based on this metaphor. The publication marked the leadership role the school had taken in prompting curriculum reform in middle schools nationally, yet they were still dealing with the realities of using the model back home.

Although support, in the form of released time, retreats, workshops and in-service, was provided for staff, their level of commitment to using the entrancing metaphor to create interdisciplinary curriculum varied. Some embraced the model and worked through teams to create specialized units (See, for example, *The business is you, Appendix B*). They were coming to realize that the curriculum emphasis was a way to reach students, rather than to teach content.

> *We are committed to the whole idea of entrancing, getting to the level of the students we are teaching. All of the things we do, teaming, all of the middle school things, we are doing to get entrance into the kids' world, to make learning relevant to the student. Learning is the key word.*

Some teams in the school used interdisciplinary curriculum most of the time, some teams used it occasionally, however, some in the school continued to use only traditional curriculum and textbooks and questioned the need for integrated curriculum. Some teachers used cooperative learning, learning styles, and hands-on activities, while others used drill and practice, worksheets, and lecture. Using the entrancing metaphor provided an opportunity for teachers to redefine their values and beliefs about content and instruction. It forced them to question the importance and value of the detail of their content specialty and to "give up" that perspective for a more global view of teaching and learning. The school represented the range of development in coming to terms with program redefinition, and their struggle was apparent as they confronted the beliefs and attitudes that provided the basis for their particular point of view.

Role Renegotiation. The essence of what it meant for those in the school to renegotiate their roles and to understand and accept the new responsibilities that came with those roles challenged the school in deep and personal ways. The

challenges and struggles emerged form a hard look at how each person in the school could contribute to actualizing their middle school mission. *We have to keep in mind that the bottom line of what we are doing here is providing for children.*

It appeared that the school had to confront their expectations for what a building principal could and should do in that role eight years ago when the current principal replaced a very popular *friend of the staff.* The expectations of teachers was made clear when one teacher said to the principal:

> *You are the fifth principal in this building, and your are the first one who ever thought about curriculum and instruction. [The others] were all managers of the building. We are having trouble adjusting.*

The principal acknowledged the differing expectations of her in her role as principal, yet she would not give up her focus on program regardless of the pressures to do so by some staff.

> *It has been eight years and there are still people who would like to see me as the manager of the building, but they have to understand that I cannot get excited about cutting the grass outside. I have to devote my energies to a program I know is important.*

The management tasks appeared to be assumed by the two assistant principals in the building who spent the majority of their time on discipline, scheduling, and building supervision, and were less involved in programmatic issues. By completing the management tasks of the school, however, the assistant principals contributed to the broader mission of the school, and their contributions were acknowledged by the staff. As one teacher said, *If you don't have the day-to-day running of the building going smoothly, the grease, you can have all the goals you want, but if the machine breaks down, it doesn't matter where you thought you were headed, you're going nowhere. I think a lot of people see [assistant principals] as that steady hand.*

Changes which had been negotiated for teachers in the building related not only to their role on their teaching teams, but also to their role within the broader school context. On the teaching teams, teachers assumed team leader roles voluntarily or were assigned that by the principal. These teachers served a quasi-administrative function on their team, however, they were not alone in accepting changes in responsibility. *[Teachers] sometimes feel they are doing two jobs. They are being mini-administrators, running their mini schools...and they are being teachers.* Many teams dispersed responsibilities across the team either by rotating the team leader position, or by sharing tasks throughout the year. These differences appeared to be negotiated by each team and no expectation was set that

each had to function identically. Clearly, however, teachers continued to struggle with the duality of their roles as the essence of what being a "teacher" really meant.

> *The game changed for teachers who are 20 year veterans. They got into [teaching] because they loved their content but kids changed and so did the community. Their preparation didn't prepare them. The school population changed to a needy population with 1 in 3 in poverty. What teachers got into teaching for changed. With the change in student population, the school needed a more stable, nurturing environment. Teachers needed different tools and had to develop them.*

To help teachers acquire new tools for their changing roles and responsibilities, a professional development program was initiated in the school by the *Instructional Resource Persons Committee*. In addition to the district institutes, in-service, and workshops, the building provided released time, summer retreats, and workshops to help teachers gain knowledge and skills in areas related to curriculum (interdisciplinary unit development), and instruction (cooperative learning, brain-based instruction) with funds available through the external grants the school had been awarded. Monthly faculty meetings were devoted to an *Adult Learner* program and reading materials were on a variety of topics were accessible to staff at the school.

The school extended beyond the more traditional cognitive emphasis on professional development and additionally included numerous experiences for those in the school to confront their change in roles on an affective level as well. For example, when the school prepared *personal turning points* for a presentation at a national conference (*National Middle School Conference Presentation, 1991, Appendix B*), teachers were asked to respond to the changes they had experienced in a personal way. Teachers described their turning points as *a series of crossroad*, *a period of time during which I asked the question why*. Some described what they felt when they were given the *freedom to choose, to stand free and equal,* or to *take risks*. They described their experiences as an *evolution* as each individual began *to contribute as a person and not just as a teacher*. The school had embraced the need to confront the *self-identity* of teachers as part of their process of renegotiating roles for members of the school community. They created events which were introspective and which caused people to expose themselves in personal ways. By providing both the cognitive and affective triggers, individuals were encouraged to grow and change both personally and professionally as they renegotiated their roles with one another.

Power Redistribution. A typology was developed by the researcher to describe the leaders who were distributed throughout the school as they worked both in harmony and conflict to bring about change. This typology describes the prestigious, visionary, instructional, positional, and resistance leaders who were identified from the interviews, and observations of the study.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Prestigious leaders, or **leaders of influence**, were people in the school with *their finger on the pulse of the staff* , who *were willing to admit when [they were] wrong and move beyond that* or who had *a lot of guts and [were] willing to speak up when they saw that things were wrong.* These individuals were complimented often by their colleagues for their integrity, courage, and persistence and for the contributions they had made in the school. These leaders had gained the support of the staff and had willing followers for their ideas.

Instructional leaders, or **leaders of curriculum**, had earned respect for their understanding and skill in curriculum development and instruction. Teachers who were willing to share their instructional expertise and curricular innovations with others were identified again and again during interviews as critical to the school's development. These were the teachers who could *get people to be a little more creative with curriculum* and were the *ones that other teachers look to as being strong educators.* In addition to individual teachers, one of the school's teams was also identified as critical to the school's movement toward increased use of integrated curriculum and active, hands-on instruction. [Team name] *have an understanding of interdisciplinary teaching and curriculum...as far as leaders and role models, they are the ones to watch.*

Positional leaders, or **leaders of groups**, were those who held formal leadership roles in the district or building. Some held positions of leadership on district committees, the professional association, and others were department chairpersons or team leaders. The discussions of these leaders focused primarily on the authority vested in the position and how the individual in that position used the authority to bring about change.

Visionary leaders, or **leaders of direction**, provided the direction, impetus, and focus for the changes which had taken place. Vision *comes from [the principal]. I think she provides the support. I think it also comes from people like [teacher name] who has an idea and wants to try it out.* It was clear in the discussion of vision, however, that not every agreed on what that vision should be and how it should be communicated.

Resistance leaders, or **leaders of the opposition**, emerged from the

disequilibrium that resulted from debates and discussions about conflicting visions for the school's future. These leaders appeared to have a general discomfort with some of the practices and procedures in the school, and although the group identified as the *loyal opposition* was small, their dissension had an impact on the school. These leaders questioned issues, initiated discussion and presented alternative plans through formal and informal channels in the school.

> *I think we have leaders of the opposition. People who are loyal or otherwise. I think there is some thoughtful opposition here. They legitimately ask, "Why are we doing this?", "How am I going to get this done?", "How am I going to feel good about it if I am only going to do it halfway?" They have a healthy skepticism about things and they want the dots on the i's and the crosses on the t's before they just jump in and start.*

There appeared to be an overlap across these five categories of leaders in the school and participation in each role was fluid. Individuals were identified as wielding more than one type of leadership influence in the school over the course of time, depending on the issue and the context. Key leaders emerged naturally and were identified consistently by the participants in the study. These leaders were distributed throughout the school and were often involved in making decisions either alone or through groups. Whether through their teams or committees, through their roles or positions, or through the strength of their individual character, these leaders were willing to risk making decisions which were not always popular in order to move the school closer to implementing its mission.

Discussion

Cross Keys had been called a middle school since it opened in 1968, however when a new principal arrived in 1985, a reclarification of what being a middle school meant was brought to the forefront in the school. Changes designed to transform the school's junior high school character into one which embodied the principles associated with the national middle school movement, were implemented by the leaders distributed throughout the school. Adaptations in the school's structure made the changes in curriculum and instruction more likely as teams learned to work cooperatively. As teams matured, their roles were refined and reshaped by the expectations of what they were to do for students and for one another. As these roles were redefined, power shifted and new leaders emerged with areas of expertise needed in a changing culture.

Tension in the school was pervasive yet accepted by the school as a by-product of their change efforts. They acknowledged that conflicts would erupt

when people's values and beliefs were challenged, but instead of avoiding the struggle, they embraced it.

Insert Figure 2 about here

I believe that the school's willingness to embrace conflict and tension as an anticipated and acceptable outcome of their change efforts enhances an understanding of what will be required for transformational change to occur in schools. I believe that the school's willingness to accept the trauma, uncertainty, and ambiguity of disagreement shed light on what is in that "difficult space" between the old and the new patterns Deal described (1990, p. 11). I believe that the school's professional development program which emphasized affective as well as cognitive experiences provided opportunities for individuals to reflect critically and personally about their role as educators, causing for some a shift in their paradigm about teaching and learning. And while it took time, effort, energy and a tolerance for pain for this shift in paradigm to occur, if schools are to truly transform, then I believe that these types of experiences need not only be tolerated but consciously planned and supported by the leaders distributed throughout a school.

Summary

This study focused on Cross Keys Middle School because of its progress towards implementing many of the practices associated with the national middle school movement. It was believed that much could be learned by an intense study of the leadership that brought about change in the school. Data were collected in the school between August, 1991 and May, 1992 in the form of formal and informal interviews, observations, and document review. A corpus of field notes was compiled and analyzed to better understand the changes which occurred in the school and the leadership which facilitated those changes.

Five themes which emerged from the data described the *mission reclarification, structural realignment, program redefinition, role renegotiation, and power redistribution* which had taken place in the school. A leadership typology was developed to describe the leadership which emerged as power was redistributed in the school. These prestigious, visionary, instructional, positional, and resistance leaders worked sometimes in harmony, sometimes in conflict, to bring about the changes in the school.

The five themes formed the foundation for the development of a change interaction diagram which described how the connections between and among the

school's mission, structure, roles, program, and leaders created a culture of conflict and tension. As a result of the school's willingness to embrace conflict and tension as an acceptable by-product of change, some in the school experienced a shift in their paradigm about teaching and learning. Others considering a transition from a traditional junior high school to a middle school may learn from Cross Keys about the role of distributed leaders in the school and how they work to bring about substantive change.

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Appendix A
Interview Protocol

1. What do you think you and the others at [school name] are committed to accomplishing?
   PROBES: What is being done to achieve this?
   What facilitates this work?
   What hinders this work?

2. When was this commitment made?
   PROBES: How was this decision made?
   How was this decision affirmed?

3. How would you describe this school to an outsider?
   PROBES: How would you describe the climate/culture?
   How would you describe the leadership?

4. How do you know when things are going well at [school name]?
   PROBES: And when things don't go well?
   What gets done?
   How does it get done?

5. What changes have you seen at this school over the past few years?
   PROBES: In leadership? In personnel? In curriculum?
   Who are the key players?
   Who has not been part of the change effort?
   Are they actively resistant?

6. What was your role in these changes?
   PROBES: How do you feel about this?
   Has your role changed over the past few years?

7. How do these changes relate to [the very first answer]?

8. What changes are still in progress that you think I should observe this year?

9. What changes would you like to see in the future?

10. Please think for a minute and tell me who you see as important leaders within the school.
    PROBES: How do they help implement the school's commitment?
    Were they involved in the change process?
    Are you comfortable with this leadership?

11. What do you do around here? Why do you do what you do around here?
    PROBE: What are the most satisfying things about being in this school?
    What are the least satisfying?

Appendix B
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Appendix B Continued: Bibliography of Documents

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Table 1
Cross Keys Middle School Organizational Chart

Team	Grade	* Teachers	Assignment
Team 1	7	5+	math, science, social studies, English, reading- writing workshop, shared LD resource teacher
Team 2	7	5+	math, science, social studies, English, reading-writing workshop, shared LD resource teacher
Team 3	8	6	math, science, social studies, English, reading- writing workshop, LD resource teacher
Team 4	8	7	math, science, social studies, English, art, reading-writing workshop, LD resource
Team 5	7-8	7	math, science, social studies, English, reading-writing workshop, French teacher, LD resource teacher
Team 6	7-8	14	art, Spanish, music, physical education, practical arts

Table 2

Cross Keys Middle School Building-Level Committee Structure

Committee	Composition	Focus
Instructional Improvement Committee (IIC)	8 classroom teachers 1 counselor 1 assistant principal 1 principal	"Daily Issues" (Ex: development of core values/mission; reading program; advisory program)
School Improvement Team (SIT)	5 classroom teachers 1 counselor 1 assistant principal 1 principal	"Visionary" (Ex: Five Year Plans; yearly building plan)
Instructional Resource Persons (IRPS)	10 department chairs 1 principal	"Staff Development" (Ex: brain-based instruction.
Staff Advisory Council	Representatives of each team & support staff Teacher Chair Administrative rep	"Teacher Concerns" (Ex: In-school suspension; hallway supervision; use of the Xerox machine;input for faculty meeting topics)

Figure 1
Cross Keys Middle School Leadership Typology

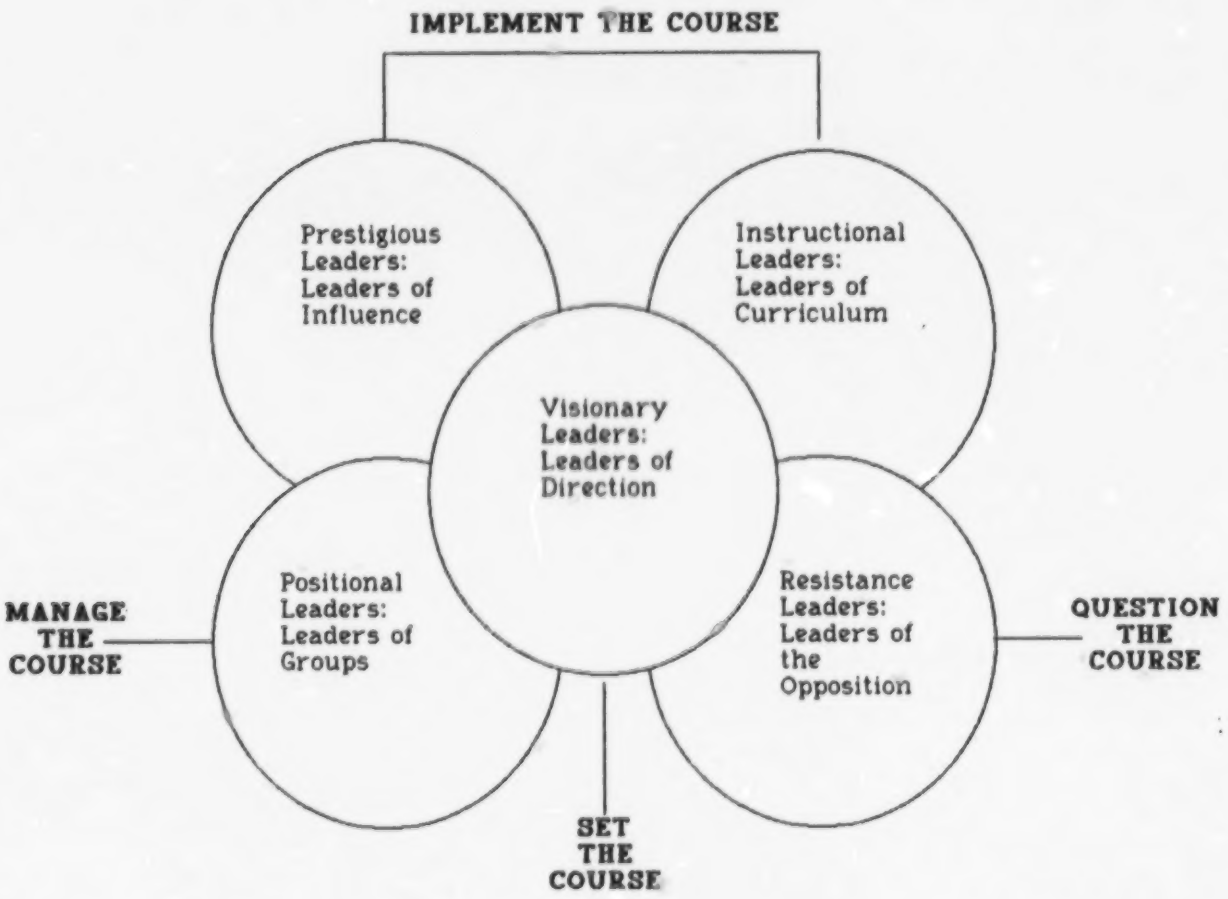
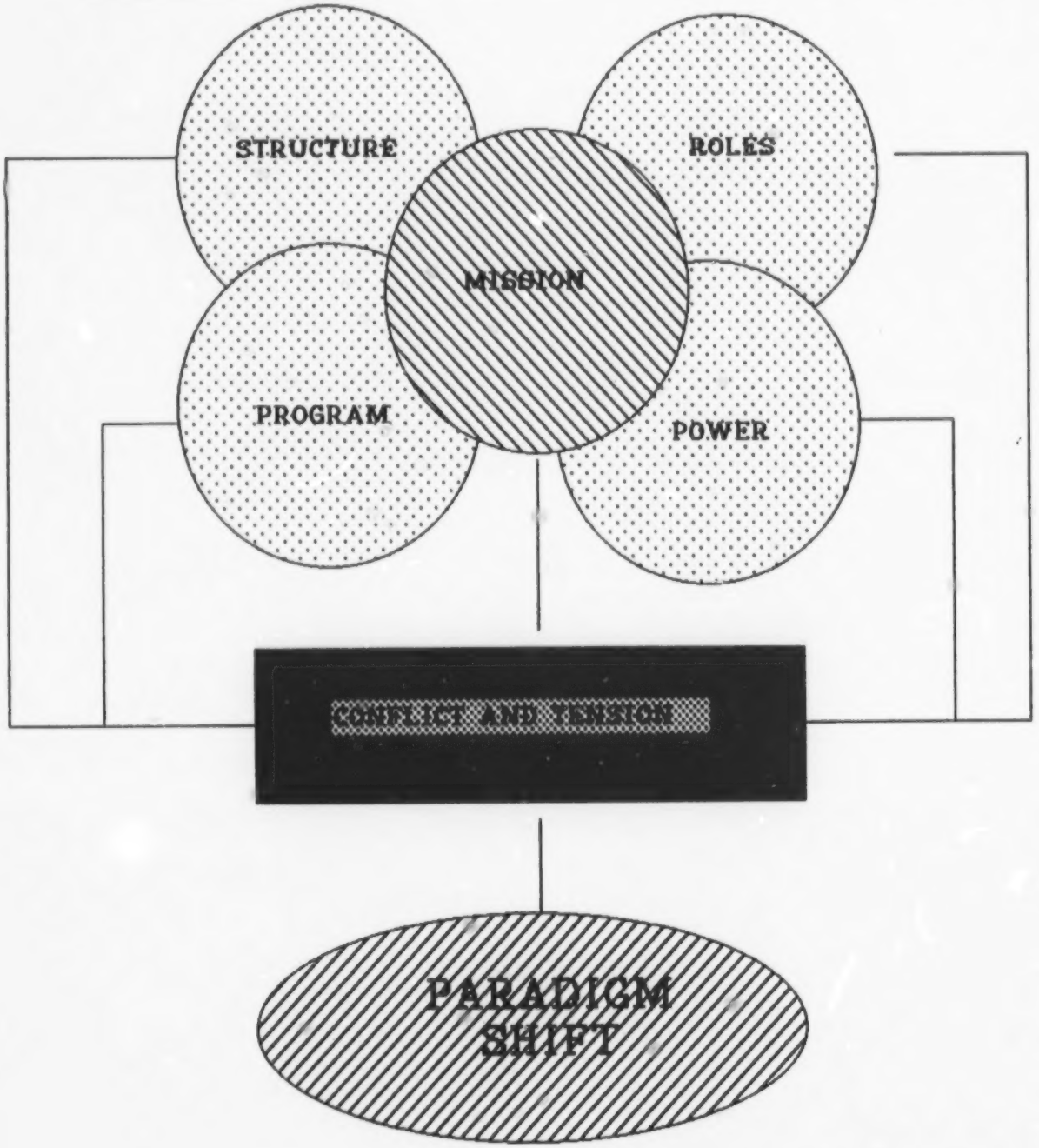

IMPLEMENT THE COURSE
Prestigious Leaders: Leaders of Influence
Instructional Leaders: Leaders of Curriculum
Visionary Leaders: Leaders of Direction
Positional Leaders: Leaders of Groups
Resistance Leaders: Leaders of the Opposition
MANAGE THE COURSE
QUESTION THE COURSE
SET THE COURSE

Figure 2
Cross Keys Middle School
Change Interaction Diagram



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